



## **PREVENTING INJURIES TO CHILDREN RIDING BICYCLES**

**The single most effective safety device available to reduce head injury and death from bicycle crashes is a helmet.**

- Make it a rule — every time you or your child ride a bike, you must wear a bicycle helmet that meets or exceeds the safety standards developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Helmet fit is important. The helmet should be comfortable and snug, but not too tight. It should sit centered on top of your head in a level position, and it should not rock forward and backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled snugly against your chin.
- If your child is reluctant to wear a helmet, try letting him or her choose his own.

**Proper bicycle fit and maintenance are also important for safety.**

- Ensure proper bike fit by bringing the child along when shopping for a bike. Buy a bicycle that is the right size for the child, not one he will grow into. When sitting on the seat, the child's feet should touch the ground.
- Make sure the reflectors are secure, the brakes work properly, gears shift smoothly and tires are tightly secured and properly inflated.

**Always model and teach proper bicyclist behavior. Learn the rules of the road, and obey all traffic laws.**

- Ride on the right side of the road, with traffic, not against. Stay as far to the right as possible.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic signals, stopping at all stop signs and stop lights.
- Stop and look left, right and left again before entering a street or crossing an intersection. Look back and yield to traffic coming from behind before turning left.

**Adult supervision of child cyclists is essential until you are sure a child has good traffic skills and judgment.**

- Cycling should be restricted to sidewalks and paths until a child is age 10.
- Children should be able to demonstrate riding competence and knowledge of the rules of the road before they cycle with traffic.

**Children should not ride a bicycle when it's dark, in the fog or in other low-visibility conditions.**

- If riding at dusk, dawn or in the evening is unavoidable, use a light on the bike and make sure it has reflectors as well.
- Wear clothes and accessories that incorporate retroreflective materials to improve your visibility to motorists.

